

I have been in office less than three months. But I am made more aware each passing day that with the proper direction and leadership, North Carolina can become outstanding in its capacity to make maximum use of its potential.

During the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity to chat with you at the breakfast table, in my office or at dinner at the Executive Mansion. You have strengthened the conviction I already hold that you want to serve your constituents conscientiously and that you are dedicated to your responsibilities as elected members of a truly great deliberative body — the General Assembly of North Carolina.

As you go about your tasks during the remaining weeks of this session, I ask you to keep in mind one thought:

The programs I have presented to you are no monument to me as an individual. There are no frills in what I am proposing—no luxuries.

What I have recommended, either in programs or revenue sources, is not frivolous. It is not a question of what one man wants. It is a larger question of what North Carolina needs.

No citizen of North Carolina will suffer unduly by supporting my program. But thousands will benefit because you were willing to enact it.

The people of North Carolina elected me Governor to provide the needed leadership during these four years. The program I present to you will enable me to better fulfill that obligation.

It is my responsibility as Governor to present a program and the ways in which it might be financed. This I have done.

You have the responsibility to evaluate both my proposals and the means of financing. I am confident you will do so with the best interests of *all* of North Carolina at heart.

Leadership—that is what I impress upon you today. That is what the people want.

Let each of us in our respective positions of leadership be honest enough and courageous enough to admit one thing:

To be influenced in our decisions by the cries of the faint hearted or the vocal disgruntlement of leaders of special interest groups who resist the necessary means of financing essential programs—this is indefensible leadership and it betrays those we represent.

I implore every member of this General Assembly to rise to the challenge we clearly face. Listen to the voice of reason and logic—not to emotion nor special interests.

And let us ask Divine guidance that our conscience can distinguish between the two.

Who will provide the leadership? As your Governor, I will.

Who can get the job done? Only you, the members of this General Assembly.

Let us all have the courage to “Go Forward” again.”